

VZCZCXRO4755  
RR RUEHBC RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV  
DE RUEHRH #8900 3250727  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
R 210727Z NOV 06  
FM AMEMBASSY RIYADH  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3480  
INFO RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T RIYADH 008900

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA  
DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI (SHUKAN), INL, DRL (OZKAN, LURIE), PRM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2015  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [EPET](#) [SA](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: A SAUDI'S VIEWS ON THE U.S. AND RULE OF LAW IN KSA

REF: 2005 RIYADH 009303

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Gfoeller for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

-----  
SUMMARY  
-----

11. (S) Echoing several other commentators and analyses, Saudi commercial lawyer and diplomat Dr. Waleed Nasser Al-Nuwaier (strictly protect) told PolOff on November 8 that the heart of most problems in Saudi Arabia is the absence of rule of law. He stressed that the USG should emphasize the need for rule of law because no one, including men, in the KSA has rights. He said that the credibility of the U.S. is undermined by its support for the Al-Saud royal family. Al-Nuwaier said that Saudis think the USG supports the Al-Saud royal family in return for access to petroleum at reasonable prices, but that this happens at the expense of democracy and human rights. USG policies raise doubts about U.S. commitment to democracy in the Middle East, including those relating to Iraq and Afghanistan. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Dr. Waleed Nasser Al-Nuwaier (strictly protect) of the MFA Diplomatic Studies Institute, Assistant Professor of International Public Law, and a petroleum and commercial lawyer, voiced his opinions in a private conversation with PolOff during a November 8 luncheon hosted by the DCM for visiting Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Middle East Program director Jon Alterman. Al-Nuwaier has traveled extensively in the U.S., speaks excellent English, has two masters degrees (one from the University of Southern California and the other from Harvard) and a doctorate (from Harvard), and is the son of the former head of the Saudi Supreme Court. Al-Nuwaier complained that the USG and Americans focus on denial of rights for women while ignoring the fact that men are also denied rights. He argued that the USG and Americans should focus on the need for rule of law, which would be applicable to everyone, instead of placing so much emphasis and attention on restrictions on women driving, freedom of movement (women must be accompanied by a male guardian), and freedom of expression or speech (the requirement that their hair and bodies must be covered in public).

13. (S) Al-Nuwaier said that the KSA is hurt by the lack of written laws and legal rulings, as well as inconsistency in the application of laws and principles. The royal family can decide at any moment and for any reason to deny anyone, including men, the right to travel, conduct business, etc. His comments on the importance of the rule of law -- not men -- echoes comments made by Human Rights First President (HRFS) Ibrahim Al-Mugaiteeb (strictly protect) and political scientist, author, and commentator Turki Al-Hamad (strictly

protect) (reftel).

14. (S) Al-Nuwaiser emphasized that people do not believe the USG when it advocates reforms (e.g., democracy, human rights) in Saudi Arabia because everyone knows there would be no royal family if the USG did not support it. He said the reason the USG supports the royal family is to gain access to oil at reasonable prices. He said the USG has the choice of either the royal family and oil at a reasonable price or democracy and human rights with oil at higher prices. He said that if there were democracy in the KSA, the new government and the people would not want to sell oil to the U.S. Saudis no longer trust or like the U.S., he claimed, therefore, the USG chooses the royal family and oil at a reasonable price.

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

15. (S) Al-Nuwaiser can be considered one of the young, dynamic, well-educated, elite Saudis who also happens to have studied in the U.S. His comments suggest that the USG cannot take for granted the support of this elite. Al-Nuwaiser's message was very clear: the arbitrary application of laws reinforces dependency on the existing patriarchal order, tribal leaders and the royal family, and connections and influence (wasta) in society -- and this elite is growing tired of it. With its nascent focus on judicial reform, it appears that the SAG, always attuned to the Kingdom's social dynamic, is paying at least some attention to concerns such as those expressed by Al-Nuwaiser. END COMMENT.  
OBERWETTER